

CDBG Application Scoring and Feedback Policy

The following is the policy and procedure the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) will use to score applications for the following grant programs:

- Blight Clearance Program (BCP)
- Main Street Revitalization Program (MSRP)
- Public Facilities Program (PFP)
- Wastewater/Drinking Water Program (WDW)
- Stormwater Improvements Program (SIP)

Scoring Committees

For each grant program a scoring committee will be formed that is chaired by the CDBG Program Director or his/her designee, and will not vote on applications. The rest of the committee will consist of:

- An OCRA Program Manager, Director or other supervisory staff;
- A member from the Grant Services team that does not take part in threshold reviews for that grant program; and
- An OCRA Community Liaison that does not have a connection to any applications submitted for that grant program. For example, if XYZ community applies for a BCP grant the Community Liaison that covers XYZ community cannot be on the BCP committee.

In the event the CDBG Program Director cannot fill a scoring committee in the manner outlined above, they will assign other OCRA or request a Grant Services staff as needed, provided that any conflicts of interest are avoided or minimized to the extent possible.

No other individuals will be allowed to participate or attend the scoring meetings. This is to ensure that all applications are review fairly.

Threshold Review

Grant Services will perform a threshold review of each grant application. In an effort to provide quality technical assistance to communities, applications that do not pass the Threshold Review will still be reviewed and scored by a Scoring Committee.

Committee Scoring

Each Scoring Committee will complete the following steps:

1. Each member will read the applications individually;
2. The committee will be convened by the chair and:
 - a. Committee members will review and discuss each application;
 - b. Scores will be assigned based on the scoring rubric via consensus of the committee;
 - c. Any comments that will help provide technical assistance will be recorded.
3. CDBG Program Director will compile all scores and provide a ranking to the Scoring Committee;
4. The committee will review and approve the rankings;
5. CDBG Program Director will make final Award determinations based on the approved ranking.

Award and Feedback

At the conclusion of the Scoring process, the CDBG Program Director will provide a list of Awarded Applications for each grant program to the OCRA Executive Director and Deputy Director for their review and approval. Upon approval, awards will be announced.

For applications that do not pass the Threshold Review or do not receive a high enough score to be funded, the CDBG Program Director will create a score report that includes comments from the Threshold Review, the scored rubric, and comments from the Scoring Committee. Once all the reports are complete, the CDBG Program Director will work with each Community Liaison to arrange a feedback phone call/meeting to discuss the score report. Prior to any feedback meeting, the CDBG Program Director will meet with each Community Liaison to review the score report. The CDBG Program Director will schedule a call with the community. The Community Liaison will participate in-person. Note, a community may request an in-person feedback meeting with the CDBG Program Director. Feedback will be provided by the CDBG Program Director and any questions about the feedback should be directed to them.

Committee Confidentiality

To ensure a fair process, the members of each committee will sign a confidentiality agreement that prohibits them from discussing an application outside of the Scoring Committee meeting. No OCRA staff member may advocate or engage in activities that could be considered advocating for a grant. Additionally, no OCRA staff should actively seek out information on the scoring of an application from committee members. If there are questions about the scoring of an application from a community they should be directed to the CDBG Program Director. This is to ensure consistency in the feedback provided to communities.

Effect

This policy is effective as of January 1, 2018 and will remain in effect until amended, superseded, or rescinded.